



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	II	Intake, Investigation and Response	
Chapter:	B	Intake	8-16-2010
Subchapter:	1	Processing Specific Referrals	
Issuance:	100	Out of State Referrals	

Overview

8-16-2010

The Division of Child Protection and Permanency' Centralized Screening Operation, the State Central Registry, receives reports or referrals from other states' child protection/child welfare service agencies regarding children or families from New Jersey (or who are now located within New Jersey's borders), who were involved in incidents in another state, or incidents that occurred in New Jersey concerning children and families who are now located or residing out of state.

This group of policies guides SCR in screening such referrals and reports, and guides CP&P Local Offices in responding to such referrals and reports, when assigned by SCR.

Definition

8-16-2010

For the purpose of this policy, "Sending State" means the state (in these United States) where the child or family resides or resided prior to the incident. The Sending State's lead child protective services (CPS)/child welfare services (CWS) agency is generally the "reporter," who contacts SCR - New Jersey's lead child protective services/child welfare services agency - to make a CPS report or a CWS referral on behalf of a child. SCR facilitates case assignment to the CP&P Local Office.

The "Host State" is the state where the child is located at present, or the state which will be called on by CP&P to assist New Jersey in a CPS investigation.

Incident Occurred in New Jersey, Child/Family No Longer in This State

SCR Records Incident as CPS Report

8-16-2010

When SCR receives a report of child abuse/neglect having occurred in New Jersey, the Screener documents the information in NJS as a child protective services (CPS) report.

For any incident that occurred in New Jersey - even if no members of the family are physically located within New Jersey at the time of the report, or even when the family no longer resides within New Jersey's borders - SCR takes the report and assigns it to the CP&P Local Office responsible for the jurisdiction where the child/family resided or were located at the time of the incident.

Explanation for Case Coding and Assignment 8-16-2010

Many states, including some that share borders with New Jersey, will NOT investigate reports of child abuse/neglect that occur in another state/jurisdiction, regardless of the location of the child at the time of receipt of the report.

Unlike New Jersey, where the State CPS agency (CP&P, IAIU or PDCIU) intervenes on behalf of any child within New Jersey at the time of receipt of the report/referral, other states may refuse to act UNLESS the state/jurisdiction where the incident occurred takes the LEAD in the investigation.

Thus, to better serve New Jersey's children and families, SCR will take a report of an incident that occurred in New Jersey - even when some or all family members are no longer in New Jersey - and route it to the CP&P Local Office responsible for the jurisdiction where the child/family resided or were located at the time of the incident for investigation.

Local Office Response 8-16-2010

Upon receipt of the assignment from SCR, the Local Office takes action, as necessary, to coordinate a CPS investigation through the State child protective services agency responsible for the jurisdiction where the child/family is physically located at the time of SCR's receipt of the report.

CP&P (i.e., the State of New Jersey's lead child protection agency) assumes the LEAD in the investigation. The assigned Worker does not cross the state line to investigate, however, looking to the host state's CPS authorities to do the necessary work.

The assigned Worker initiates a report to the County Prosecutor responsible for the jurisdiction where the alleged incident occurred, if the allegation meets the reporting criteria. See [CP&P-II-C-4-200](#), Conditions Reportable to the Prosecutor. The Worker coordinates investigation efforts with the County Prosecutor's Office, as appropriate and necessary.

If some, but not all, family members ARE in New Jersey, the assigned Worker makes contact through a field investigation in accordance with standard CP&P CPS investigation policy (see [CP&P-II-C-5-800](#) Investigations of Abuse/Neglect Referrals and Reports, and [CP&P-II-C-5-100](#), Child Protection Investigation Workflow). Efforts are then made, as appropriate, to secure assistance from the other state's CPS agency

to see the remaining family members - including the alleged perpetrator, if necessary - to complete the investigation and assure the child is safe.

If the entire family is located out of state, the assigned Worker/Supervisor may ask the "host" state's CPS agency to interview the child victim, non-offending parent, siblings, other immediate family/household members, and the alleged perpetrator to complete the investigation. CP&P looks to the host state agency to assess child safety and risk in accordance with its policies and practices. The assigned Worker may contact the police in the other state for help, when appropriate/if necessary. The police cannot conduct a CPS investigation, however.

Case handling decisions - such as how to investigate, whether to contact the client family directly by telephone, and/or whether to make an exception and cross the border into the other state to make an in-person contact - may differ, depending on the presenting situation, the particular state/jurisdiction, the other state's proximity to New Jersey, whether the family is "on vacation" out of state and will be returning to New Jersey in the near future or may never return, etc. The assigned Worker/Supervisor consult the Casework Supervisor for direction, and, if needed, the Case Practice Specialist.

The assigned Worker/Supervisor brings any conflicts, failures or refusals to cooperate, or other difficulties to the attention of the Casework Supervisor and the Local Office Manager. Seek assistance from the Area Office, Interstate Services Unit, Office of Licensing (regarding regulated treatment programs and adoption agencies), or other authorities within the Department of Children and Families, as necessary, toward resolution.

CPS Finding Determination Recorded in NJ SPIRIT/Child Abuse Registry 8-16-2010

The assigned CP&P Worker makes a child protective services finding determination here, in New Jersey, and enters it in NJ SPIRIT (i.e., enters the finding in New Jersey's "Child Abuse Registry," see [CP&P-IX-G-1-100](#), based on the professional, courtesy work conducted by the other state's CPS agency, combined with field response activities by CP&P, if any.

When making the CPS finding determination, apply standards and finding categories used by NJ CP&P (rather than the standards or finding determination categories used by the other state). See [CP&P-II-C-6-100](#), CPS Investigation Finding Determinations – Four Tier Findings.

Case Closure

8-16-2010

If the family has relocated to the other state, close the CP&P case upon completing the investigation, documenting the investigation, entering the investigation finding

determination in NJ SPIRIT, and making notification of the investigation finding determination.

Incident Occurred in Another State, Child/Family Reside in New Jersey

SCR Records Incident as CPS Report or CWS Referral 8-16-2010

When SCR receives a report of child abuse/neglect having occurred in another state, in which the child victim and family reside in New Jersey, and are believed to be back in New Jersey at present, the Screener documents the information in NJS, and codes the report as follows, based on the role the other state is playing in the investigation:

- If the other state is taking the lead in the investigation, SCR codes the incident a Child Welfare Service (CWS) assessment, in which CP&P will provide courtesy services on behalf of the other state. (CP&P may interview the child victim and/or other family members to assist the other state in its investigation efforts, conduct an in-home safety assessment, etc.)
- After the conclusion of the investigation/agency intervention, CP&P does NOT enter a CPS finding determination in New Jersey's Central Registry.
- If the other state is NOT taking responsibility for the investigation and is only contacting SCR to report the incident, and the incident meets New Jersey's definition of child abuse/neglect, SCR codes the incident a Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation. CP&P takes full responsibility for the investigation, proceeding in accordance with agency policy (CP&P-II-C-5-800).
- At the conclusion of the investigation, CP&P makes a CPS finding determination, and enters the finding in New Jersey's Central Registry, maintained in NJ SPIRIT.

Local Office Response

8-16-2010

Regardless of which of the above scenarios apply, the assigned CP&P Local Office requests detailed information from the sending state, to fully document the allegation; prior case history in that state, if any; the investigation process/components; and the finding determination.

Based on the investigation outcome and the CPS finding determination, regardless of which scenario applies, the assigned CP&P Local Office determines whether to open a case for continued services, based on applicable CP&P policy. See [CP&P-II-C-2-200](#), Initial Response - Assessment.

Incident Occurring in an Out-Of-State Facility or Substitute Care Setting Regarding a New Jersey Child

SCR Actions

8-16-2010

Actions taken by the State Central Registry Screener when notified of a child protective services allegation in a foster home or congregate care facility (group home, residential treatment center, or youth shelter) located out of state, affecting a child placed there from or by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, include:

- Notify the CPS agency in the host state of the allegation(s) through its intake/screening operation (or confirm that the agency is aware of, and initiating action to address, the reported allegation).
- Document a report in NJ SPIRIT as "Related Information" (to produce a printable DCF Form 1-1, Screening Summary, coded RI), to document an incident in an open CP&P case.
- Assign the report (DCF Form 1-1, Screening Summary) to the Local Office that supervises the open service case (i.e., the office that supervises the child in out-of-home placement), for follow-up with the host state's CPS agency/responding authority.
- Provide copies of the DCF Form 1-1 to:
 - Each LO Manager responsible for a child placed in the home or facility;
 - The Assistant Area Director who is responsible for the above-referenced LO Manager(s);
 - The DCF Interstate Services Unit;
 - The Area Business Office that supervises the individual contract with the facility or Contracted Agency home/program (copy the Office of Contract Administration in Central Office for statewide contracts), or the Children's System of Care (CSOC) is responsible for the contract;
 - The Resource Family Support Unit (for foster home matters only); and
 - The DCF Office of Licensing.

Local Office Response

8-16-2010

The CP&P Local Office which is supervising the CP&P case works through the child protective service agency in the state where the incident occurred/facility is located, to assure the incident is investigated. CP&P, the Children's System of Care (CSOC), and the DCF Office of Licensing initiate action, as necessary and appropriate, to assure that New Jersey children are safe in the out-of-state facility/foster home. See [CP&P-IV-A-2-100](#), Assessing Child Safety in Out-Of-Home Placement Settings.

Inquiry About Family Who May Be Fleeing from Another State - PRS Alerts

Overview

8-16-2010

The SCR Special Duties Unit handles inquiries about families who are suspected of fleeing from another state's child protective services agency or authority which require more than a referral to the respective local law enforcement authority.

These procedures are intended to: 1) protect children physically located within the borders of New Jersey; and 2) help concerned citizens, agencies, shelters, and/or service programs to better serve children and families from other jurisdictions, who are in New Jersey at present.

SCR Screener Responsibilities

8-16-2010

Upon receipt of such a call, the SCR Screener proceeds as follows:

- If police action only is needed in New Jersey or in the other state, the SCR Screener directs the caller to contact the police.
- If more than a call to the police/law enforcement is warranted, the SCR Screener transfers the call to the SCR Special Duties Unit for appropriate handling.

Special Duties Unit Procedures

8-16-2010

Upon receipt of a call from a Screener, the Special Duties Unit Representative proceeds as follows:

- Search PRS Alerts forwarded to New Jersey from other states.

(Incoming Alerts from other states' CPS agencies, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico are received by, and processed through, the DCF Interstate Services Unit. PRS Alerts are active, nationwide, for three months; if not renewed, they are destroyed.)

Determine if an Alert was issued regarding the child/family:

- If yes, review the Alert, and
- Comply with directives, as appropriate.
- Contact the other state's CPS agency to determine whether the family is known. If known, gather details - current status, case history, family member identifying information, etc. (Generally, the sending state retains court jurisdiction in these matters.)
 - Contact the other state's CPS hotline, for state-operated CPS programs, and
 - Contact the respective county/city, for locally-operated programs.

- Make inquiry: Is there reason to believe that the child/family has absconded from that state? Is there an active court order? Was the agency awarded custody of the child? Are there any outstanding warrants? How can New Jersey (SCR/DCF/CP&P) assist, to assure the child's care and safety NOW, while the child/family is in New Jersey?
- Document the call in NJS at the Intake Window, to generate DCF Form [1-1](#), the Screening Summary:
 - If CPS or CWS action IS needed in New Jersey, take a referral/report, code it CWS or CPS, and route it to the respective CP&P Local Office for assessment/investigation;
 - Contact the local police/law enforcement authority in New Jersey, if warranted; OR
 - If no further action is required of SCR or CP&P operations, code the call "Information and Referral" (I&R), document the Intake in NJS at the Intake Window; AND
 - Print out the Intake, DCF Form [1-1](#). Attach a copy of the Alert to the intake.
- Provide follow-up, tracking, statistical analysis, feedback to another state's CPS agency, etc. as necessary/appropriate to address the call/situation.
- Reach out to the reporter. Thank him or her for the call. Advise if CP&P will be providing services.

After Hours Procedures

8-16-2010

Upon receipt of such a call after hours, the SCR Screener, upon consultation with the Call Floor Supervisor, follows the above procedures (for the Special Duties Unit, [CP&P-II-B-1-100](#)) by initiating the call to the other state CPS agency him or herself; writing up the Intake in NJS; assigning it to SPRU, if timely agency intervention is warranted; and routing it to the Special Duties Unit for follow up the next work day.

Case Example

8-16-2010

Description of presenting situation - A concerned party calls the SCR hotline, expressing alarm that a family/parent/child is presently in New Jersey, and there is reason to believe he/she/they are fleeing from another state's child protection agency or legal authority. (Such calls may come from juvenile, domestic violence, or homeless shelters, or from other service programs in New Jersey serving transient or at-risk populations.)

Notification from Another State's CPS Agency That a Family Under Supervision has Relocated to New Jersey

Overview

8-16-2010

This policy describes SCR handling of a notification from another state's child protective services/child welfare services agency of a family under its supervision (i.e., in "active" case status) who has relocated to the State of New Jersey (i.e., the agency has reason to believe a family under its jurisdiction now resides in the State of New Jersey).

The policy also details the responsibility of the CP&P Local Office upon receipt of the case assignment from SCR.

For action by CP&P when a child/family under supervision has moved to another state, see [CP&P-III-C-8-200](#), Referring a Child/Family Who Has Moved Out of County/State.

Also see Interstate Services Manual, [CP&P-VIII-D-1-200](#), Request for Services for Child Already in New Jersey When Other State Retains Legal Jurisdiction.

SCR Screener Gathers Detailed Case History From Other State 8-16-2010

Upon receipt of such a call, the SCR Screener gathers detailed information from the caller/representative of the sending State's CPS/CWS agency, including, but not limited to:

- The legal status of the case in that state/jurisdiction. Is there a current court order? What does it say? What power is awarded to the CPS agency? (Request a copy of the order be faxed to SCR or the Local Office.)
- The family composition. Who comprises the client family household? Who, specifically, is open for services, "active," under the agency's care and supervision?
- The case history in that state/jurisdiction. The nature of any child protective services allegations. The CPS finding determination of each prior investigation. Was a safety assessment conducted? Status of child safety? Risk assessment completed? Level of risk found?
- Whether there are pending allegations or an incomplete CPS investigation at present.
- Is the family involved with/known to law enforcement authorities in that state? Are there pending criminal charges or warrants for arrest?
- Is there a history of domestic violence within the family/client household?
- Is there a history of mental illness within the family/client household? If so, request diagnosis; details.

- Is there a history of substance abuse by the parent(s)/caregiver(s)? If so, gather all details. Is treatment part of the case plan? Is substance abuse treatment court ordered?
- What specific services are/were being provided by or through the State CPS/CWS agency? Are services court ordered?
- The anticipated level of cooperation by the family. Is the family aware of the impending referral to SCR/CP&P?
- The anticipated actions of the sending state CPS/CWS agency. By contacting SCR, is the agency making a child protective services allegation (is there a current report of child abuse/neglect to investigate?), a child welfare service assessment referral, or a request for services on behalf of the family?

The SCR Screener asks the caller to identify a contact person/lead representative from that State CPS/CWS agency, should additional or clarifying information be needed, or legal action be warranted from the sending State.

Case Assignment to Local Office

8-16-2010

Based upon information gathered, and whether the other State is making a CPS allegation, SCR documents the report, and assigns it to the CP&P Local Office responsible for the jurisdiction where the child and family currently reside in New Jersey.

If the caller is making a child protective services report, the SCR Screener codes the report "CPS," with an "Immediate Response," or "Respond within 24 hours."

In the absence of a CPS allegation, SCR codes the call a Child Welfare Service (CWS) Assessment, and assigns it to the Local Office as a 72-hour Response. If information provided by the sending State CPS/CWS agency is of particular or imminent concern, whereby a child may be at risk or unsafe, a more timely response may be warranted. SCR may assign a more timely response (Immediate or Within 24 Hours).

Local Office Response

8-16-2010

The assigned Worker, guided by his or her Supervisor in the Local Office, conducts a CPS investigation or a CWS assessment in accordance with standard CP&P policy. See [CP&P-II-C-5-800](#), Investigations of Abuse/Neglect Referrals and Reports (for CPS), and [CP&P-II-C-2-200](#), Intake Assessment, and takes action, as warranted, to protect the child and assist the family.

The Local Office determines whether the child/family will benefit from services, and whether CP&P should open a case for services or refer the family to a service provider in the community.

If, upon response, the family refuses services, the Local Office:

- Takes action, as appropriate, to protect the child and assure the child is safe (see [CP&P-II-C-2-700](#), Removals).
- Contacts the sending State's contact person/lead representative, to determine if that State will pursue court action.
- Consults the Deputy Attorney General, as to the legal status of the matter in New Jersey. (The DAG may intervene by contacting the sending State's legal counsel.)
- Consults the DCF Interstate Services Unit, if insight or advocacy is needed in establishing rapport with the other state's CPS/CWS agency.
- Contacts SCR, to upgrade the original CWS referral to a CPS report, if warranted.

When a family here, in New Jersey, refuses services from CP&P, CP&P will need authority to take further action. CP&P can act, as warranted, to protect the child on behalf of the sending State, including removal and placement of the child, based on a child protective services court order from the sending State.

CP&P may take action to return the child to the sending State - i.e., return the child to the sending State's lead CPS/CWS agency-based on the directives in the court order.